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Source: *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Apr., 1916), pp. 66-72
Published by: Catholic University of America Press
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25011388
Accessed: 19-01-2019 16:43 UTC

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MISCELLANY

NOTES ON SOME CONVERT RELATIVES OF THE PRESIDENTS

(Contributed by SCANNELL O'NEILL, ESQ.)

It will doubtless occasion interest among the many readers of the CATHOLIC HISTORICAL REVIEW to learn that, of the twenty-seven Presidents of the United States and their wives, eighteen are represented by members of their families among the more noted converts to the Catholic faith. There are doubtless many whose names are unknown to us, but the following list contains those we have been able to discover in a research which has lasted some years:

THE WASHINGTONS.

In the year 1650 (or 1656, according to some authorities) John and Andrew Washington left England to settle in Virginia. Their brother, James, the same year, settled in Rotterdam, Holland, and became the ancestor of all the continental Washingtons. Of James Washington's descendants, the German and Austrian branches are Catholic and still bear the original family name.[1] The first of the Washingtons to become a Catholic was Jacob, the great-grandson of James Washington. This Jacob was born in Rotterdam, in 1778, and died in Bavaria, in 1848. After settling in Bavaria, he entered the army, in which he rose by successive stages to the post of Lieutenant-General. He married a noble lady and was himself created a Baron by the King of Bavaria, who regarded him as the founder of the Bavarian Army. All of his descendants in Germany and Austria today are Catholic, including his grandson, Baron Peter George Washington, commandant of dragoons in the Imperial Austrian Army operating against the Russians. As Baron Peter is childless, he is the last of the direct branch of the German Catholic Washingtons. The following collateral relatives of George Washington are numbered among converts to the Church in this country:

MRS. S. M. B. WHITE (grand-niece), who died in Evansville, Ind., in 1875.

MISS EUGENIA WASHINGTON (great-great-grand-niece), born in 1839; died in Washington under most distressing circumstances, in 1899. Miss Washington was the daughter of William Temple Washington, a son of George Steptoe Washington (the favorite nephew of General Washington) and his wife, Lucy Payne Washington, sister of Dolly Madison. Miss Washington's great-great-grandfather, Samuel Wash-

[1] **Authorities:** *Autobiography of Baron Jacob Washington*, Munich, 1840; *Almanach de Gotha*; *Genealogies of the Washington Family*. New York, 1880; GUIDO BRUNO, *A History of the Dutch-German Branch of the Washington Family*, in *Year Book* of the *German-American Historical Society* of Illinois, 1912; *Yale Alumni Records, Class of 1841*. New Haven, 1892; Letters to Scannell O'Neill from Miss Lucy B. Lewis, of Marmion, from Mr. Lawrence Washington, of the Library of Congress, and from Mr. Richard Blackburn Washington.

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ington, was a son of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington, parents of our first President. She was one of the founders of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

RICHARD BLACKBURN WASHINGTON, Richmond, Virginia, who became a Catholic in 1912.[2]

THE LEWIS FAMILY of Marmion, Osso, Va., are the Catholic great-great-grandchildren of Colonel Fielding Lewis and his wife, Betty Washington, only sister of General Washington. They owe their faith to their mother, Mary Imogen Green Fielding, the wife of Fielding Lewis (1808–1878), whose father and mother, John and Rebecca (Forrest) Green, became converts to the Church. Mrs. Fielding Lewis brought all her family up Catholics. Miss Lucy B. Lewis, the only unmarried daughter, now makes her home at Marmion. She sold the Copley painting of her great-great-grandmother, Betty Washington Lewis, last year to the authorities at Mt. Vernon.[3]

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[2] Richard Blackburn Washington's descent is as follows:

Augustine Washington *m.* (2) Mary Ball.

- John Augustine
  - Corbin
    - John Augustine
      - John Augustine (last owner of Mt. Vernon)
        - George (last Washington born at Mt. Vernon)
          - Richard Blackburn Washington
- George Washington

[3] Descent of the Catholic branch of the Lewises of *Marmion:*

Col. Fielding Lewis (1726–1781) *m.* Betty Washington, sister of George Washington

- George
  - Daingerfield
    - Fielding (1808–1878) *m.* Mary Imogen Green (a Catholic)
      - Lucy
      - Anne
      - Zola
      - Mary

      (All four are Catholics)
  - Mary *m.* Col. Byrd Lewis
    - Catherine, *m.* Prince Napoleon Achille Murat
- Lawrence, *m.* Eleanor Parke Custis, granddaughter of Martha Washington, and adopted daughter of General George Washington

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MRS. ELIZABETH FRANCES NASH CECIL, a well-known writer of the last century and a devout convert, was named for two of her famous ancestresses, Elizabeth Washington and Frances Madison. She was the author of *Industrial Heroes, A History of Popular Suffrage, Literary Salons*, etc. She married an English convert, the late Ernest Walpole Cecil, of the Duke of Rutland's family.

JOHN NICHOLSON WASHINGTON (cousin) was born in 1819, and died in 1869. Mr. Washington was a graduate of Yale in 1841, and Mayor of New Berne, N. C. Two of his daughters became Ursuline nuns—Sallie Vail Washington, known in religion as Mother Anne, who died in 1885, and Mother Mary Juliana, who is still living in the convent in Arcadia, Mo. Dr. James R. Washington, an eminent physician of St. Louis, and a brother of John N. Washington, was received into the Church on his deathbed some time about 1870.

MRS. ALICE WALLACH, Hyattsville, Maryland, daughter of Dr. Warwick Evans (1828–1915), is through her mother, the later Mary Mason Washington Evans, a direct descendant of John, half-brother of General Washington.

MRS. ELIZABETH PASCHAL O'CONNOR, the authoress and playwright, wife of the Hon. Thomas Power O'Connor, the Irish leader, is descended in direct line from Anne Pope, General Washington's grandmother. Her son, by a former marriage, is Francis Howard, the painter, of London.

MOTHER MARY APPOLONIA DIGGES, a nun of the Visitation Convent, Georgetown, D. C., whose cure from consumption, when at the point of death, is one of the remarkable occurrences in American Church annals, was a near relative of our first President. She was professed at Georgetown in 1816.

MRS. JOHN WHEELER FAIRFAX, of New Orleans, is another of the Catholic descendants of the Washington family who, though not converts, have an interest for us. Her mother, Anastasia Raynal Washington, was the daughter of John Stith Washington, who married a French Catholic lady, Miss Raynal. Mrs. Fairfax traces back in direct line to Lawrence Washington.

Finally, we may here refer to a curious reference which appears in Migne's *Dictionnaire des Conversions* (Paris, 1852), a copy of which we consulted many years ago in the library of Creighton University, Omaha, Neb. In this book mention is made of a Mr. Washington, set down, curiously enough, as a "grandson" of General Washington. This man, we are informed, espoused the cause of the Greeks, for whom he fought, and in 1826 was received into the Church in Paris. The only Washington, as far as we have been able to find, who fought for the Greeks was Peter Grayson Washington, a great-nephew of Lund Washington, manager of General Washington's Virginia campaigns, and whose exact relationship to the Father of his country it is not easy to determine.

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JOHN AND JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

The late MONSIGNOR HIRAM FRANCIS FAIRBANKS (1845–1915), Rector of St. Patrick's Church, Milwaukee, was a descendant of Henry Adams, the ancestor of John Adams.

The late GENERAL THOMAS KILBY SMITH, father of Mr. William George Smith, was also a descendant of Henry Adams.

MISS MARY QUINCY, an eminent Boston convert of the last century, was a direct descendant of Edmund Quincy (1602–1635) the great-great-great-grandfather of John Quincy Adams.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

FRANCIS GILDART RUFFIN, JR., Richmond, Va., son of Col. F. G. Ruffin, great-great-great-grandson of Thomas Jefferson. All the children of F. G. Ruffin, Jr., are Catholics.

MONSIGNOR HIRAM FRANCIS FAIRBANKS (1845–1915), Rector of St. Patrick's Church, Milwaukee, was a descendant of John Coolidge, ancestor of the Coolidge branch of the descendants of Thomas Jefferson.

DR. WILLIAM JEFFERSON GUERNSEY, Frankford, Pa., is through his mother, born a Jefferson, a descendant of the same family as that of Thomas Jefferson.

JAMES AND DOLLY MADISON.

MISS MARGARET HITE, of Virginia, known in religion as Sister Mary Theonella, a Visitation Sister at Georgetown, D. C., and

WILLIAM D. WILLIS, of Washington, cousins of President Madison.

COL. JAMES MADISON CUTTS (1805–1863), the son of Dr. Richard Cutts (1771–1845), for six successive terms Member of Congress from Maine, by his wife, Anna Payne Cutts, great-granddaughter of Mrs. John Payne, aunt of Patrick Henry. Mrs. Richard Cutts was the youngest and favorite sister of Dolly Madison, and during the last years of Jefferson's rule, with Mrs. Madison, presided over the White House, from which latter place she was married during the administration of her brother-in-law, President Madison. Col. Cutts was the father of Adèle Cutts,[4] who married as widow of Stephen A. Douglas, Gen. Robert Williams, U. S. A. Col. Cutt's aunt, Lucy Payne Washington, was the wife of George Steptoe Washington, nephew of General George Washington.

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[4] Mrs. Adèle Cutts Williams edited the *Memoirs and Letters of Dolly Madison*, which contain many interesting letters written by Dolly Madison to her sister, Mrs. Cutts.

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JAMES MONROE.

HENRY LEE HEISKELL (died in Washington, 1914), the son of Dr. Henry and Elizabeth Gouverneur Heiskell, granddaughter of President Monroe.

MISS MARY MONROE, great-granddaughter of President Monroe. Miss Monroe, who lives in Tacoma, Wash., was received into the Church several years ago.

MRS. RINGGOLD, wife of General Ringgold, U. S. A., niece of President Monroe.

COL. JAMES MONROE and his brother, FATHER ANDREW MONROE, S.J., sons of Andrew, a brother of President Monroe.[5]

ANDREW JACKSON.

MRS. MARY DONELSON WILCOX, wife of James A. Wilcox, Member of Congress from Mississippi; daughter of Andrew Jackson Donelson (1800–1871), nephew of President Jackson, who was Minister to Prussia and candidate for the Vice-Presidency with Millard Fillmore on the Know-Nothing ticket in 1856. Mrs. Wilcox was born in the White House, of which she was mistress during a part of her grand-uncle's administration. Mrs. Wilcox's family followed her into the Church; her daughter, Miss Mary R. Wilcox, of Washington, is Recording Secretary-General of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The late MRS. MARY JACKSON MORROGH, wife of Dr. Morrogh, of New Brunswick, N. J., was a cousin of President Jackson.

MARTIN VAN BUREN.

The late MADAME ELIZABETH VAN NESS VAN BUREN TEN BROECK, of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, was a cousin of President Van Buren.

JOHN TYLER.

MRS. JULIA GARDINER TYLER (1820–1889), widow of President John Tyler.

PEARL TYLER, daughter of the above, and wife of William Munford Ellis, and her daughter.

MARTHA JEFFERSON TYLER WAGGAMAN (1782–1855), the wife of Theodore E. Waggaman, Washington (who was also a convert), was a daughter of Governor John Tyler, of Virginia, and a sister of the President.

MISS SARA WAGGAMAN (1818–1905), daughter of the above—in religion, Sister Mary Regis, of the Sisters of the Visitation, Georgetown, D. C. Miss Waggaman was for some years the mistress of the White House.

MISS MOLLY ELLIOTT SEWELL, the novelist, a grand-niece of President Tyler.

[5] The late Dr. Richard Henry Clarke was authority for the statement that a daughter of President Monroe became a nun in France. (This is a mistake, as the President's daughters married and raised families.)

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JAMES K. POLK.

Several near relatives of President Polk, the descendants of his ancestor, Robert Polk, are numbered among our American converts, including:

THE BARONESS MARY DE CHARETTE, of Paris, was the daughter of Col. A. J. Polk, of Nashville, Tenn., the son of Bishop Leonidas Polk, General of the Confederate Army.

MISS POLK, sister of the above.

MRS. SOPHRONIA POLK HORNSBY, St. Louis, the daughter of the Hon. Trusten Polk (1811–1876), Governor of, and United States Senator from, Missouri, and Judge Advocate-General of the Confederate States.

MRS. FLORENCE CONN STITH, wife of Taylor Stith, St. Louis, granddaughter of the Hon. Trusten Polk.

MRS. ESTHER WINDER POLK LOWE, wife of Gov. Enoch Lowe, a daughter of Col. James Polk, and cousin of President Polk.

ZACHARY TAYLOR.

MRS. ANNIE KING BARRET, widow of Mayor Albert Buckner Barret (a convert), of St. Louis—is descended from the historic Thompson and Taylor families, which have given five Presidents to the Uhited States—Madison, Taylor, the two Harrisons, and Tyler.

MRS. LAWRENCE JONES, daughter of Col. James Taylor; COL. CLAY TAYLOR, and TAYLOR STITH, St. Louis, are cousins of President Taylor.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

MISS FRANCES BUCHANAN, the actress, the niece of President Buchanan.

PRESIDENT AND MRS. LINCOLN.

The late JOSEPH R. LINCOLN, Carthage, Ill., was a cousin.

SISTER MARY GENEVIEVE TODD, of the Sisters of Providence, Terre Haute, Ind., the daughter of Mrs. Lincoln's cousin, who also with his family became a Catholic.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

MRS. B. M. SAFFORD, of Washington and Hot Springs, N. C., widow of Andrew Johnson, son of President Johnson, daughter of Col. J. H. Rumbough, of Hot Springs, N. C.

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ULYSSES S. GRANT.

CAPT. ALGERNON SARTORIS, son of Nelly Grant Sartoris; grandson of Gen. Grant.

MRS. ROSEMARY SARTORIS WOOLSTON, daughter of Nelly Grant Sartoris; granddaughter of Gen. Grant.

JUDGE DENT, brother of Mrs. U. S. Grant.

MISS DORA GRANT, cousin of the General.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

LAWRENCE J. KIP, San Francisco, grandson of Bishop William Ingraham Kip, first Anglican Bishop of California. His mother was a first cousin of President Cleveland.

R. BACON, Tiffin, Ohio, a cousin of President Cleveland.

WILLIAM McKINLEY.

CAPT. ARTHUR S. MCKINLEY, U. S. A., who became a Catholic in 1900, was a first cousin of President McKinley.

PRESIDENT AND MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

MRS. GERTRUDE ELIZABETH TYLER CAROW, of New York and Rome, the mother of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt.

MOTHER ELIZA ANNE BAYLEY SETON.

ARCHBISHOP JAMES ROOSEVELT BAYLEY, Archbishop of Baltimore, cousin of Theodore Roosevelt.

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT.

MRS. JULIA WALBRIDGE SMITH TAFT, wife of Henry Watters Taft, Esq., New York, a sister-in-law of President Taft.

MISS CAROLINE TAFT (1811–1851), Cincinnati, a native of Vermont; in religion Sister Mary Sebastia, of the Sisters of Charity, Bardstown, Ky., cousin of Taft. Her father and his family also became Catholics.

PRESIDENT AND MRS. WILSON.

The late WILLIAM GALT, Washington; brother of Norman Galt, first husband of Mrs. Woodrow Wilson.

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